

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2609

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 22195

E.O. 11652: X-GDS-1

TAGS: VN, LA, CB, FR

SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH QUAI CONCERNING INDOCHINA

SUMMARY: EMBOFF HAD PERIODIC TOUR D'HORIZON WITH ACTING DIRECTOR FOR ASIA BOLLE ON AUGUST 27. GOF SEES SOME SIGNS OF PROGRESS TOWARD A CIVILIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS MECHANISM IN SAIGON, BUT THINKS IT TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHEN "NORMAL" RELATIONS MAY BE POSSIBLE. FRENCH EVACUATION FLIGHTS ARE SUCCESSFUL TO DATE, AND GOF HOPES FRENCH OF ASIAN ORIGIN MAY EVENTUALLY BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE SVN. GOF HAS NOTED THAT BASIC ECONOMIC PLANNING FOR BOTH VIETNAMS IS BEING HANDLED BY DRV. GOF THINKS THAT VIETNAMESE ARE DREAMING OF BEING ABLE TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE AS A THIRD WORLD LEADER. KHMER IN PEKING HAVE SAID SIHANOUK WOULD GO TO UNGA AFTER A FEW DAYS IN PHNOM PENH. GOF THOUGHT ONE SHOULD NOT BE EXCESSIVELY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE LAO BEING ABLE TO RETAIN SOME INDEPENDENCE; PRC INFLUENCE SHOULD ASSIST THEM IN AVOIDING CULTURAL ANNEXATION BY THE DRV. FRENCH WILL ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO ASSIST TAI DAM REFUGEES TO RE-
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SETTLE IN NEW CALEDONIA. ALTHOUGH GOF HAS BEEN HOSPIT-

ABLE IN ACCEPTING REFUGEES FROM THE INDOCHINA COUNTRIES, SOME OF THE MORE PROMINENT POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN REFUSED ENTRY AT THIS TIME. END SUMMARY

1. VIETNAM. GOF RELATIONS WITH PRG.

BOLLE SAID THERE APPEARS TO BE A SLIGHT MOVEMENT TOWARD A CIVILIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS ESTABLISHMENT IN SAIGON IN THAT THERE IS NOW A VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALLY IN SAIGON. TO DATE HE HAS ACCEPTED CONTACT ONLY WITH THE HUNGARIANS AND POLES (DRAWN FROM THE OLD ICCS STAFFS) WHO HAVE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIONS, NOT EMBASSIES. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS IN SAIGON CONTINUE TO DEAL WITH COL. DOI OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. FRENCH "CHARGE" TO THE PRG MICHEL HURIET HAS RETURNED TO PARIS FROM HANOI BECAUSE PRG WAS UNWILLING TO INDICATE WHEN HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ESTABLISH HIMSELF IN SAIGON. THE GOF CONSIDERED THAT HIS CONTACTS WITH THE PRG REPRESENTATIVE IN HANOI ADDED VERY LITTLE TO FRANCO/PRG CONTACTS IN PARIS AND SAIGON. THE GOF WILL SEND HURIET BACK ONLY WHEN THEY ARE CONVINCED HE WILL BE ABLE TO PROCEED RAPIDLY TO SAIGON. THE FRENCH CONSIDERED THAT REPORTS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MISSIONS IN SAIGON IN OCTOBER WERE STILL BASICALLY JUST RUMORS. THERE IS NO CLEAR INDICATION YET WHEN "NORMAL" RELATIONS WITH SAIGON MAY BE ESTABLISHED; HENCE THE GOF REMAINS RELUCTANT TO PREDICT WHEN THEY MAY ASK TO PROTECT U.S. INTERESTS IN SVN. BOLLE HOPED THEY WOULD HAVE SOME WARNING WHICH WOULD GIVE THE U.S. TIME TO WORK UP DOSSIERS ON THE SUBJECTS WE WISHED GOF TO RAISE SO THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE A DISORGANIZED LIST OF INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS.

2. FRENCH EVACUATION FLIGHTS.

ALTHOUGH THE MORE GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH FLIGHTS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PRG PERMANENT MISSION IN PARIS, THE SPECIFICS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT BY THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN SAIGON WITH THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICE OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. THE FRENCH WERE PLEASED THAT THEY HAD BEEN ABLE BASICALLY TO KEEP UP THE 5 FLIGHTS A WEEK, MOST OF THEM NEARLY FULL. THE

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PRG STILL CONTROLS THE DEPARTURES SO THAT PERSONS WHO HAVE THEIR PRG EXIT VISAS BUT HAVE NOT COMPLETED ALL OTHER FORMALITIES ARRIVE AT THE PLANE BUT ARE UNABLE TO DEPART. TO DATE THE PRG HAS ACCEPTED PRIMARILY FRENCH CITIZENS OF "METROPOLITAN" ORIGIN AND "UNDESIRABLE" CITIZENS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. FRENCH OF ASIAN ORIGIN HAVE HAD DIFFICULTIES, BUT THE QUAI THINKS THAT THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF PRINCIPAL BUT MERELY PRIORITY

FOR THE EUROPEANS. GOF EXPECTS MANY FRENCH CITIZENS OF
ASIAN ORIGIN TO DEPART LATER AND IS CONTINUING TO
EMPHASIZE TO PRG THAT THEY ARE EQUALLY FRENCH IN THE
EYES OF THE GOF.

3. ECONOMIC PLANNING.

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BOLLE SAID GENERAL ECONOMIC PLANNING FOR BOTH
NORTH AND SOUTH SEEMS CENTRALIZED IN HANOI. ALTHOUGH
THERE ARE VISITS TO THE SOUTH AND SOUTHERNERS ARE
WORKING WITHIN THE DRV PLANNING APPARATUS, THE OVERALL
DECISIONS FOR THE BROADER LINES OF THE NEXT 5-YEAR
PLAN ARE MADE BY DRV. CONSULTATIONS ON 1975 FRENCH AID
WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN NOVEMBER, BUT NO DATE IS
SET. THE VIETNAMESE APPARENTLY HOPE TO HAVE FRANCE
CONTINUE WITH AID OFFERED TO GVN; THE DRV HAS ASKED
THEM, FOR EXAMPLE, TO CONTINUE AID TO THE HA TIEN
CEMENT PLANT. AS FOR PETROLEUM, THE QUAI BELIEVES

THE VIETNAMESE HAVE NOT YET CONTACTED FRENCH FIRMS.
ALTHOUGH THE DRV MIGHT PREFER SOVIET OR PRC ASSISTANCE
TO SUCH AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THEIR ECONOMY, NEITHER
HAS THE CAPABILITY. FRANCE WOULD HAVE THE CAPABILITY,
BUT THE FRENCH COMPANIES SUCH AS AQUITAINE/VIETNAM,
NOW CONSIDER THAT THE RISKS ARE TOO GREAT CONSIDERING
THE TERMS WHICH THEY CAN EXPECT FROM THE DRV/PRG.
FRENCH COMPANIES HAVE LONG BEEN INVOLVED IN PETROLEUM
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DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DRV, BUT GOF THINKS DRV WOULD
NOW WISH TO DISCUSS PROSPECTING AND EXPLOITATION FOR
BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM.

4. DRV AS THIRD WORLD LEADER.

BOLLE SAID THAT THE DRV CLEARLY CONSIDERS THE
PETROLEUM POSSIBILITIES OF NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM TO
BE OF PRIME POLITICAL IMPORTANCE. VIETNAMESE CLEARLY
HOPE THAT WITHIN 5 YEARS THEY WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE
SUCH AN INCOME FROM PETROLEUM AS TO GIVE THEM THE MEANS
OF PLAYING A PROMINENT POLITICAL ROLE AMONG THE THIRD
WORLD COUNTRIES. THE FRENCH HAVE FOUND THE NVN TO BE
OBSESSED BY THE EXAMPLE OF ALGERIA AND THE PERSONALITY
OF BOUMEDIENNE. THEY HOPE THAT IF THEY CAN AUGMENT
THEIR CURRENT MILITARY AND POLITICAL STRENGTH IN THE
AREA WITH THE ECONOMIC STRENGTH WHICH COMES FROM
PETROLEUM EXPORTS, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO REPLACE OR AT
LEAST RIVAL ALGERIA AS A FOCAL POINT FOR THIRD WORLD,
NON-ALIGNED POLITICS. BOLLE NOTED THAT THE VIETNAMESE
WITH THEIR USUAL ARROGANCE WERE LOOKING BEYOND BEING
MERELY THE STRONGEST POWER ON THE INDOCHINESE PENINSULA.

5. REPORTS FROM SAIGON.

FOR THE MOMENT THE DIPLOMATIC POUCHES BEING
CARRIED BY THE FRENCH CARAVELLES ARE VERY LIMITED;
ONLY THE MOST ESSENTIAL OFFICIAL TRAFFIC AND PERSONAL
MAIL IS EXCHANGED. THE FRENCH HOPE TO IMPROVE THIS
SITUATION SHORTLY, AND BOLLE SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO
THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING THE FRENCH ACQUIRE FOR USG
PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE IN SAIGON. FROM TRANSLATION
THEY HAD SEEN AND THE REPORTING OF THEIR EMBASSY IN
SAIGON, THEY HAD GATHERED THAT, IN GENERAL, THE MOST
IMPORTANT PRONOUNCEMENTS WERE ALSO DIFFUSED BY THE
INFORMATION SERVICE TELETYPE AND THE COMMUNIST RADIOS.

6. CAMBODIA: SIHANOUK'S TRAVELS.

THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN PEKING HAD LEARNED FROM A
MEMBER OF SIHANOUK'S STAFF THAT SIHANOUK WOULD BE
GOING TO PHNOM PENH ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY HIS WIFE
MONIQUE. SIHANOUK WAS TOLD SPECIFICALLY BY KHIEU

SAMPHAN THAT ANY STAFF HE MIGHT REQUIRE WOULD BE
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FURNISHED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES; SIHANOUK'S USUAL
ENTOURAGE WAS NOT WELCOME. THE CAMBODIAN SAID FURTHER
THAT SIHANOUK WOULD STAY IN CAMBODIA ONLY A FEW DAYS
SINCE HE WOULD SHORTLY LEAVE FOR NEW YORK AS THE HEAD
OF THE CAMBODIAN DELEGATION. BOLLE NOTED THAT KHMER
COMMUNIST ANNOUNCEMENTS INDICATED IENG SARY WOULD BE
THE HEAD OF DELEGATION, BUT IT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT
TO INSERT SIHANOUK. BOLLE COMMENTED THAT NO ONE FROM
THE QUAI WENT TO THE AIRPORT IN CONNECTION WITH IENG
SARY'S TRANSITING FRANCE TO LIMA BECAUSE GOF
WISHED TO SHOW IT WAS STILL DISPLEASED WITH THE GRUNK
FOR ITS BEHAVIOUR AGAINST FRENCH NATIONALS IN PHNOM
PENH.

7. LAOS:

BOLLE SAID THE GOF CONSIDERED THE COMMUNIST TAKE-
OVER IN LAOS NOW TO BE ALMOST COMPLETE. SUCH NON-
COMMUNIST PRESENCE AND POLICIES ARE REMAINED WERE ON
COMMUNIST SUFFERANCE AND PRIMARILY FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS
PURPOSE. BOLLE THOUGHT THIS SITUATION MIGHT CONTINUE
FOR SOME TIME, AND IF SO IT WOULD BE THE RESULT OF PRC
INFLUENCE. TO DATE THE NVN AND SOVIETS HAVE BEEN MOVING
AHEAD VERY RAPIDLY, BUT THIS DOMINANCE HAD CERTAINLY
NOT BEEN UNNOTICED BY PEKING. ALTHOUGH THE HIERARCHY

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OF THE LAO COMMUNISTS PARTY WAS ORGANIZATIONALLY TIED TO HANOI AND PERHAPS IDEOLOGICALLY MORE ATUNED TO MOSCOW, CHINA'S ROLE AS THE BIG NEIGHBOR COULD NOT IN THE LONG RUN BE DISCOUNTED. BOLLE'S PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT LAO NATIONALISTS OF ALL IDEOLOGIES WOULD REALIZE THAT ONLY CHINESE INFLUENCE COULD PREVENT LAOS FROM BEING VIETNAMIZED. THE LAO KING HAD ONCE TOLD BOLLE THAT THE LAO HAD NO REAL FEAR OF THE CHINESE; THE LAO HAD PAID TRIBUTE TO THE CHINESE FOR CENTURIES, HAD RECEIVED CHINESE DELEGATIONS, HAD SINIC MINORITIES WITHIN LAOS, BUT HAD NEVER HAD THEIR FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTIONS OR WAY OF LIFE THREATENED BY THE CHINESE. BOLLE THOUGHT THAT IN THEIR OWN QUIET AND PATIENT WAY THE LAO WOULD GRADUALLY FIND A WAY TO BALANCE OFF CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE INFLUENCE SO AS TO RETAIN A LAO IDENTITY. ALTHOUGH THE CURRENT DRV POSITION OF STRENGTH AND THE CHINESE RELUCTANCE TO OPPOSE HANOI SEEMED TO PROVIDE LITTLE HOPE, BOLLE THOUGHT LAO PASSIVE RESISTANCE SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED.

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8. FRENCH ASSISTANCE FOR TAI DAM REFUGEES.

BOLLE SAID THAT FRANCE WAS VERY MUCH AWARE OF ITS MORAL OBLIGATION TOWARD THOSE WHO HAD FOUGHT WITH THE FRENCH PRIOR TO 1954. MANY TAI DAM IN LAOS AND THAILAND WERE JUSTIFIED IN CLAIMING FRENCH ASSISTANCE EVEN NOW 20 YEARS AFTER THE PERIOD OF SERVICE. SINCE THESE TAI DAM WERE FOR THE MOST PART UNEDUCATED AND KNEW NO FRENCH, IT WOULD BE MOST DIFFICULT TO RESETTLE THEM IN FRANCE. SINCE THAILAND IS CONTINUING TO SHOW A LACK OF HOSPITALITY, THE FRENCH ARE MAKING PREPARATIONS TO RESETTLE THEM IN NEW CALEDONIA WHERE GOF HOPES THEY CAN ADJUST IN THE MOUNTAIN AREAS. BOLLE COMMENTED THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT CONTINUED TO BE VERY HARSH ON SUCH REFUGEES. IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE REFUGEES TO GET OUT OF THE CAMPS TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY, AND WHEN THEY DID SO IT WAS USUALLY THANKS TO

A SUBSTANTIAL BRIBE. THE RTG BLOCKED FRENCH EMBASSY ACCESS TO THE CAMPS. FOOD WAS INSUFFICIENT TO THE POINT OF MALNUTRITION AND OCCASIONALLY NEAR STARVATION. THE LACK OF MEDICINES MADE FOR A HIGH MORTALITY RATE. THE GOF HAD TRIED BILATERALLY AND THROUGH THE UNHCR TO HAVE THESE CONDITIONS IMPROVED WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. THE UNHCR IN BANGKOK SEEMED INEFFECTIVE. AS FOR THE STORIES OF FRENCH RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN FRENCH GUIANA, BOLLE REPEATED CHAYET'S REMARKS THAT ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE WITH TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES REQUIRED IN GUIANA WERE BEING CONSIDERED. IT WAS TOTALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION OF SENDING TO GUIANA THE LARGE NUMBER THEY ARE CONSIDERING FOR CALEDONIA SINCE GUIANA LACKS THE AGRICULTURE OR INDUSTRY WHICH COULD ABSORB UNTRAINED REFUGEES.

9. FRENCH WELCOME FOR POLITICAL LEADERS.

BOLLE NOTED THAT SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK, FORMER LAOS DEFENSE MINISTER, HAD REQUESTED ENTRY INTO FRANCE. GOF SENT AUTHORIZATION TO BANGKOK IMMEDIATELY. ON THE OTHER HAND FORMER GVN PRIME MINISTER KHIEM HAD ASKED TO COME TO FRANCE TO VISIT HIS DAUGHTER, AND GOF HAD REFUSED THE REQUEST. GOF CONSIDERED THAT IT WAS A BIT TOO SOON FOR THEM TO RECEIVE KHIEM, WHO HAD PLAYED SUCH A PROMINENT

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ROLE IN SAIGON. FURTHERMORE GOF CONSIDERED KHIEM HAD SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO HAVE HIS DAUGHTER VISIT HIM IN TAIWAN. BOLLE SAID FRANCE WOULD CONTINUE TO SHOW TRADITIONAL HOSPITALITY TOWARD FORMER POLITICAL FIGURES, BUT WOULD EXAMINE EACH CASE INDIVIDUALLY IN THE LIGHT OF ITS POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES.

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